1	2	3	4	5
Mizoram	0.74	0.65	0.10	13.04
Nagaland	0.81	0.74	0.06	8.00
Tripura	1.77	1.61	0.16	9.09
North-Eastern Region	**20.32**	**17.61**	**2.71**	**13.33**
ALL INDIA:	1,985.94	1,780.13	205.81	10.36

*In 2004, figure of Sikkim was included in West-Bengal.

Programmes for welfare of SCs/STs

*395. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the role played by the Ministry in creating awareness about constitutional rights and various pro-poor programmes of Government;

(b) the items of the National Common Minimum Programme which directly concern the welfare of SCs/STs; and

(c) how many from the above have already been fulfilled as on date?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) The strategy of the Ministry is to secure social justice and allocation of resources to support programmes for social, economic and educational advancement of the Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Disabled Elderly and victims of Substance Abuse. The Ministry plays a pivotal role in generating awareness on the constitutional rights and various welfare schemes/programmes being implemented for the benefit of its target groups through electronic, print and outdoor media sources. Besides, awareness is also generated through commemoration of days, National/Regional Conferences and National Awards.

The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) provides for full equality of opportunity particularly in education and employment for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Though the primary responsibility for promotion of interests of SCs/STs rests with all the Central Ministries in the areas of their operation, this Ministry as also the Ministry of Tribal

Affairs specifically carry out the special interventions for empowerment of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes. The items directly concerning the welfare of SCs/STs comprise of affirmative action including reservations in Private Sector and legislation for conferring ownership rights in respect of minor forest produce, rights of tribal and other forest dwelling communities over mineral & water sources in the forest areas and other socio-economic and environmental issues.

On the issue of affirmative action including reservations for SC/ST youth in the Private Sector, the dialogue is continuing with the Industrial Organisations. In order to redress the problems of ownership rights and eviction in respect of the tribal communities and other forest dwelling communities dependent on forests, "The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006" has been enacted.

Entry of foreign law firms

†*396. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give permission to foreign legal firms to function in India;

(b) if so, the conditions laid therefor and the provisions under which such permission would be given; and

(c) the opinion of the All India Bar Association in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government of India has consulted the Bar Council of India, the statutory body created under the Advocates Act, 1961.

Shortage of teachers in schools

†*397. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the report

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.